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Governor Baker Signs Bill Repealing Archaic Massachusetts Laws

Removing antiquated laws will formally ensure women's access to reproductive health care in MA

BOSTON – Governor Baker today signed S. 2260, *An Act relative to reproductive health*, repealing a number of archaic provisions, some of which were initially passed into law in the 1800s and have since become largely unenforceable in light of decisions made by the U.S. Supreme Court and Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court. He was joined by Lt. Governor Karyn Polito, Speaker DeLeo (D-Winthrop), Senator Chandler (D-Worcester), Representative Haddad (D-Somerset), Dr. Jennifer Childs-Roshak, President & CEO of Planned Parenthood Massachusetts, Rebecca Hart Holder, Executive Director of NARAL Massachusetts, and several other members of the legislature.

"Massachusetts has long been a leader in women's health care and access to family planning services, and signing this bipartisan bill into law is another step in the right direction," **said Governor Baker**. "We are pleased to join our colleagues in the Legislature to formally repeal archaic laws."

"We are pleased to collaborate with our legislative colleagues to continue the Commonwealth's tradition of protecting a woman's right to reproductive health care," **said Lieutenant Governor Polito**. "Repealing such antiquated laws from an unrecognizable time will ensure that Massachusetts remains a safe and welcoming place for all young women."

S. 2260 repeals a law that requires an abortion conducted during or after the 13th week of pregnancy be performed in a hospital authorized for general surgery, which

conflicts with current practice that permits women to also receive services at health clinics. These laws are rescinded effective immediately upon the governor's signature.

"The Baker-Polito Administration has a proven track record of protecting women's access to affordable, safe and reliable family planning services," said **Health and Human Services Secretary Marylou Sudders**. "Massachusetts leads the country in health care with nearly universal coverage, and signing this important bill into law reaffirms our commitment to comprehensive health care."

"It's critical that we protect the rights of Massachusetts women so they may continue to make their own choices regarding their health," said **House Speaker Robert A. DeLeo, (D – Winthrop)**. "This action takes outdated and misguided laws off the books and makes clear where the Commonwealth stands on reproductive and women's rights."

"As women's rights are under constant assault on a national level, this vital legislation will ensure Massachusetts remains at the forefront of protecting women and the services they most need," said **Senate President Karen Spilka (D-Ashland)**. "I am thankful the Governor signed this bill. It is as a sign of our Commonwealth's continued and steadfast commitment to protecting the health of women and their access to essential care."

"I have filed this legislation over and over again to no avail. But in these times we have reached a tipping point, and women and men across Massachusetts are standing up to anti-women, anti-choice policies," said **Senate President Emerita Harriette L. Chandler (D-Worcester)**. "Access to women's health services are under constant threat in Washington, and state legislatures must act to ensure that women continue to have the right to choose. I am very happy that we are signing this bill today."

"By passing this legislation, we in Massachusetts are reaffirming our commitment to further ensure basic rights for our citizens", stated **Rep. Patricia A. Haddad (D-Somerset), House Speaker Pro Tempore**. "We are removing opportunities to enforce archaic laws which should have been removed long ago".

"Repealing archaic laws impacting women's reproductive health care has been decades in the making. Once again, we have proven that regardless of what happens in Washington, the basic rights of women will be safeguarded in Massachusetts" said **Rebecca Hart Holder, President of NARAL Pro-Choice Massachusetts**. "We are grateful to Governor Baker for signing this legislation and removing harmful, archaic laws from the Massachusetts General Laws. With this important victory, we are sending a clear message to Washington. We will not turn back the clock, and we will

not put the lives of women at risk. Repealing antiquated laws is the first, critical step to ensuring that even if Roe v. Wade were overturned tomorrow, the reproductive freedom of the people of Massachusetts will be unequivocally guaranteed."

"Today Massachusetts proclaimed its commitment to reproductive rights, health care access, and equality by wiping these harmful laws from the books," **said Dr. Jennifer Childs-Roshak, President and CEO, Planned Parenthood Advocacy Fund of Massachusetts.** "These archaic laws represented a Massachusetts that no longer exists—one in which women did not have autonomy over their bodies, lives, or futures—and one that should never again exist. As Brett Kavanaugh's nomination to the U.S. Supreme Court puts the right to abortion on the line, Massachusetts is reaffirming we value reproductive rights, individual liberty, and the ability of all people to make their own decisions about their own bodies, their own lives, and their own futures."

"I've been concerned about the impact of archaic laws remaining on the books since the fight for marriage equality," **said House Majority Whip Byron Rushing (D – South End).** "During the fight for marriage, city and town clerks began to enforce the '1913 law' that prevented marriages in Massachusetts if they were not legal in the couple's home state. This law was originally used to prevent interracial couples from coming to Massachusetts to be legally married here. After decades in obscurity, and not being enforced – but still 'on the books' – it was then used to prohibit marriage for same sex couples. It is critical that we take all archaic laws off of our books, because we never know how an old, hateful law will be used in new, hateful ways in the future."

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